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Domestic Emergency Management: Reinventing the Processes Used by the Federal Government in Managing Domestic Disasters

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ABSTRACT

REINVENTING THE PROCESSES USED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN MANAGING DOMESTIC DISASTERS

The Federal government's response to natural disasters has been inadequate. GAO, the National Academy of Public Administration, FEMA IG, and the National Performance Review, have criticized Federal disaster response, and FEMA in particular.

This paper traces the Federal disaster response during Hurricane Andrew and the Great Floods of 1993, and uses these recent events to create a revised and improved agency.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Legal Establishment of FEMA	2
II. CURRENT STRUCTURE OF DOMESTIC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	6
Stafford Disaster Relief & Emergency Assistance Act . .	6
III. RECENT TEST OF CURRENT SYSTEM	8
Losses Caused by Disasters	8
Hurricane Andrew	9
The Great Flood of 1993	11
IV. STUDIES, REPORTS AND FINDINGS	13
GAO Report	13
National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) . .	14
FEMA IG	15
National Performance Review	16
V. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR DOMESTIC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	18
Legislation	19
Funding	20
Training for State and Local Governments	22
Communications and Information Technology	22
Role of the Military	23
Role of the National Guard	24
Conclusions	25
ENDNOTES	26
BIBLIOGRAPHY	28

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the United States today, many Americans are still trying to rebuild their lives after two devastating and catastrophic natural disasters--Hurricane Andrew (1992) and the great floods in the midwest in 1993. Are these Americans struggling alone? Does the US Government have an organization in place to help these victims? Does the system work? What has been done to establish, improve, or replace the current system? These questions and their answers are of serious concern to all Americans.

This paper will consider our past civil defense system in an effort to answer these questions. I will explore the changes that have taken place over the years and determine their effectiveness. An in-depth review of Hurricane Andrew and the 1993 midwest floods will be conducted to measure whether the government's response was adequate. Finally, to meet the expectations of the American people in regard to domestic emergency management, I've outlined what I believe to be a strategic framework for an effective program.

Faced with the end of the Cold War and downsizing, the military should take a serious look at the role of domestic emergency management. For example, the National Guard could provide a solid organizational structure from which to launch into our next domestic emergency.

LEGAL ESTABLISHMENT OF FEMA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can trace its roots back to the original intent of the preamble of the US Constitution. The founding fathers clearly intended to provide a government system that would respond to national emergencies. In the words of the preamble, effective response to such emergencies would be necessary to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense [and] promote the general welfare."

At the same time, the Constitution created a national government of limited powers, reserving to the States (or the people) all powers not delegated to the Federal Government.¹ As Madison said in the Federalist Papers,

the powers delegated by the...Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the state governments are numerous and indefinite....The powers reserved to the several states will extend to all the objects which, in the ordinary course of affairs concern the lives, liberties, and properties of the people,² and the internal order, improvement and prosperity of the state.

Within our founding father's definitions, the role of disaster relief or emergency management falls within the States. Today, however, we complicate the issues surrounding emergency management by assigning the duties and responsibilities to Federal, State, local, and private organizations, depending on the emergency. The Federal responsibility primarily focuses on helping these organizations respond to domestic emergencies in a limited geographic area. In large scale emergencies, the Federal Government can provide management and financial assistance. If, however, the domestic emergency threatens national security, the Federal Government would assume management responsibility.

With these parameters established, it was imperative for the government to establish a set of guidelines to define its role. The first formal attempt was the Federal Civil Defense Act (FCDA) of 1950. As amended, this Act provides the basic policy guidance for civil defense for all levels of government, and for all other civil defense documents. Section 3(c) defines the term civil defense as:

all those activities and measures designed or undertaken (1) to minimize the effects upon the civil population caused or which could be caused by an attack upon the United States or by a natural disaster, (2) to deal with the immediate emergency conditions which would be created by any such attack or natural disaster, and (3) to effectuate emergency repairs to, or the emergency restoration of, vital utilities and facilities destroyed or damaged by any such attack or natural disaster. Such term shall include, but shall not be limited to, (A) measures to be taken in disasters (including the establishment of appropriate organizations, operation plans, and supporting agreements; the recruitment and training of personnel; the conduct of research; the procurement and stockpiling of necessary materials and supplies; the provisions of suitable warning systems; and, when appropriate, the nonmilitary evacuation of civil population); (B) measures to be taken during attack or natural disasters (including the enforcement of passive defense regulations prescribed by duly established military authorities; the evacuation of personnel to shelter areas; the control of traffic and panic; and the control and use of lighting and civil communications); (C) measures to be taken following attack or natural disaster (including activities for fire fighting; rescue, emergency medical, health, and sanitation services; monitoring for specific hazards of special weapons; unexploded bomb reconnaissance; essential debris clearance; emergency welfare measures; and immediate essential repair or restoration of damaged vital facilities.

This was only the beginning of what was to become FEMA's guidelines. While establishing a disaster relief program, this original Act did not focus on immediate assistance following a disaster, but on longer term recovery. It also defined the Federal role as secondary to State and local efforts. Finally, the Act clearly placed a strong emphasis on civil defense rather than on domestic emergency management.

In 1965, Section 205, "Contributions for Personnel and Administrative Expenses"

allowed the States financial contributions necessary and essential for State and local civil defense personnel and administrative expenses on the basis of approved plans which shall be consistent with the national plan for civil defense approved by the Administrator for the civil defense of the States.

These are the funds which keep the States and Federal Government working together. The Federal Government provides from one-half to 100 percent of the total cost of State and local civil defense personnel and administrative expenses.

While Section 205 outlined the use of funds for administrative costs, Section 207, "Dual Use of Attack-related Civil Defense and Disaster-related Civil Defense, provided that

funds available to the States under this Act may be used by the States for the purpose of preparing for, and providing emergency assistance in response to, natural disasters to the extent that the use of such funds for such purposes is consistent with, contributes to, and does not detract from attack-related civil defense preparedness.

The underlying issue of priority is defined in this section. Emergency management for domestic disasters stemming from natural or technological hazards were to take a back seat to civil defense. In addition, several Federal agencies were involved in the various aspects of emergency management: the Office of Civilian Defense, the Federal Civil Defense Administration, the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, and the Office of Emergency Planning. Confusion existed between the various organizations over management control.

The focus on civil defense continued for the next 20 years, with only minor changes made in policy. In most cases, domestic emergency events such as the Alaskan earthquake (1964),³ Hurricane Betsy (1965),⁴

and Hurricane Camille (1969),⁵ were the catalysts for minor policy changes.

After the Office of Emergency Planning was abolished in 1973, the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, Defense, and the General Services Administration took over the emergency preparedness program.⁶ With so many agencies responsible for parts of the program, there were problems and criticisms such as lack of overall authority, who would provide funding, and duplication of effort between agencies.

Over the next few years, several studies were conducted including: the President's Office of Emergency Preparedness,⁷ the National Governor's Association,⁸ and finally a Congressional Report that stated that "the current state of the Federal preparedness effort can be summed up in four words: dilution, proliferation, duplication, and neglect."⁹

President Carter's Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978,¹⁰ created FEMA whose primary role was to serve as the single point of contact for coordination of all Federal emergency preparedness planning, response, and mitigation activities as prescribed by Federal law, Executive Orders, and National Security Directives.¹¹ The following year, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief Act of 1979 revised the Federal Disaster Relief Act of 1970.¹²

- incorporate the coordination mechanisms and structures of other appropriate Federal plans and responsibilities into the overall response;
- assign specific functional responsibilities to appropriate Federal departments and agencies; and,
- identify actions that participating Federal departments and agencies will take in the overall Federal response, in coordination with the affected State.¹³

The Plan applies to all Federal Government departments and agencies. It covers all States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federal States of Micronesia, or the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The response assistance includes those actions and activities that support State and local government efforts to save lives, protect public health and safety, and protect property. The Plan addresses response activities, but does not specifically address recovery assistance.

An important element of Federal assistance provided under amended PL 93-288 is to supplement State and local government response efforts. The emergency support functions then coordinate with the Federal coordinating Officer and State officials to identify specific response requirements, and will provide Federal response assistance based on State-identified priorities.

CHAPTER III

RECENT TEST OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM

Losses Caused by Disasters

Before looking at the specifics of Hurricane Andrew and the floods of 1993, it is important to review the magnitude of the losses over the years caused by natural disasters in the United States. During the period 1900 to 1989, more than 13,000 people lost their lives in hurricanes from Texas to the northeast; property losses incurred exceeded \$43 billion.

From 1959 to 1988, 23,488 tornadoes struck the United States. In the south, from North Carolina due west to Texas, 11,343 tornadoes hit. Another 9,234 tornadoes struck the Midwestern region (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, and Kentucky). The northwestern States including Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming--an area not generally associated with tornado activity--had 588 tornadoes during the same period. Annual losses from tornadoes averaged \$590 million; losses from landslides totaled \$1-2 billion; and flood losses reached an estimated \$2.2 billion.

In addition to the average annual fire deaths of 5,900 persons, the United States can expect the following average death rates from other threats: 146 from floods, 93 from winter storms, 83 from tornadoes, and 25 to 50 from landslides.¹⁴

Obviously, there are examples of life and property losses that far exceed the averages listed above, but the point here is that FEMA's work in domestic management is ongoing and extensive. With this large responsibility, can they handle the requirements? For a recent review of their performance, I will first look to South Florida in 1992 and Hurricane Andrew.

Hurricane Andrew

When Hurricane Andrew struck it was not a surprise--at least not to the people of South Florida. The National Hurricane Center (NHC) in Dade County, Florida began watching Andrew when it was only a tropical depression. Three days later, after it intensified 1,000 miles off the Leeward Islands, the NHC meteorologists named it Andrew. Two days later Andrew was upgraded to a category three, then category four hurricane as rated on the Saffir-Simpson scale. The NHC went to the media and notified Floridians. Andrew struck the US coast at 3:00 a.m. on Monday, 24 August 1992. The estimated damage was placed at approximately \$20.8 billion. There were 49 deaths attributed to the storm. The destruction of over 75,000 homes forced the evacuation of nearly 200,000 people. In addition, Florida agriculture suffered a \$1 billion loss.

The director of Dade County's Office of Emergency Management, Kate Hale, weathered the storm in a war room full of telephones connecting her to State, country Federal and private disaster relief agencies. Three days later, after promises for immediate assistance from President Bush, Florida Governor Lawton Chiles, and Wallace Stickney (director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency), Ms. Hale had this to say: "Where the hell is the cavalry on this one? We need food. We need water. We need people. For God's sake, where are they?"

This was a question that thousands of South Florida residents were also asking. Did the Federal Government forget about them? Actually, a week before the hurricane, the director of military disaster relief for the US Army began tracking Andrew as it blew west from Africa. Based on their experience with Hurricane Hugo, they had compiled lists of needed items such as tents, blankets, water, electric generators, etc. By the time the hurricane hit, the Pentagon had set up a 24-hour-a-day special task force at the Army Operations Center. Although the Army was ready to go, State officials in Florida did not have a clear idea of the damage done.

The criticism that State officials were unaware of the extent of the damage was a direct reflection on FEMA. State, local and volunteer agencies fell far short of providing the amount of life-sustaining services needed in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane. For example, during the first three days after Andrew struck, the combined efforts of State, local and volunteer agencies provided meals for 30,000 disaster victims a day, although Andrew left about 250,000 people homeless and potentially in need of mass care.¹⁵ These statistics reinforce the criticism that State officials did not know the extent of the damage.

In the aftermath of the storm, the report card on the response of Federal Emergency Management Agency was dismal. The Assistant Comptroller General (Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division) of the General Accounting Office (GAO), J. Dexter Peach, had this to say when he testified before the Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, US Senate: "In summary, we found that the Federal Government's strategy for

comprehensively and effectively dealing with catastrophic disasters is deficient."

What lessons did we learn from Hurricane Andrew? Did FEMA use that experience to improve their operation? FEMA was soon to test the resulting "new and improved system" with the 1993 floods.

The Great Flood of 1993

As early as 16 March, the National Weather Service predicted that the Ohio Valley would face flooding in the spring because of a wet winter and the 13 March blizzard. What began as heavy snow and rain in the upper midwest, ended with the worst flood the region has ever seen devastating an area over 15,000 square miles--equivalent to the size of Florida. In terms of damage, the flood of '93 cost approximately \$10.5 billion. There were 50 deaths, over 74,000 persons evacuated, 55,000 homes or buildings destroyed, and a loss estimated at \$6.5 billion to crop damage alone.¹⁶ Hundreds of counties in the nine States bordering the upper reaches of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers were Federal disaster areas. In addition, the flood paralyzed East-West shipping by rail and truck due to the large geographic area it covered. This not only affected flood victims, but was also felt nationwide when several manufacturing plants who counted on "just in time" deliveries had to shut down due to lack of materials.

Mindful of criticism over foot-dragging in Hurricane Andrew, by 13 July, FEMA had established more than a dozen centers in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois and Missouri to process loan forms and distribute aid to victims.¹⁷ FEMA also set up the following programs for flood victims:

--emergency shelter and cash vouchers based on need to buy food, clothing, medicine, bedding and other items;

--Shelter for up to 18 months in rental units;

--low interest loans to replace belongings and to rebuild;

--grants of up to \$11,900 to low-income residents;

--emergency loans from the Farmer's Home Administration with a repayment period of up to 40-years to replace buildings, equipment, livestock and supplies for farmers not covered by insurance.

When the water receded, it left behind something more difficult to dispose of than mud: dead fish and driftwood. It also left hundreds of questions. When could people move back to the flood plain? Should they? Should the government buy flooded homes? Should the government reimburse people who had no flood insurance? Should the government rebuild levees? Some scientists and environmentalists called for a partial return to nature, and for residents to remove their homes and businesses from the flood plain to give the rivers elbow room. However, those ideas would create a political story by pitting farmers and developers against conservationists.

CHAPTER IV

STUDIES, REPORTS AND FINDINGS

Congressman Chet Holifield's comments at a 1974 congressional hearing on reorganization efforts in emergency management best summed up the responses that FEMA received after previous disasters. He pointed out that organizing Federal agencies effectively to mobilize governmental efforts for both man-made and natural disasters was a continuing problem. Despite the fact that much experimentation and many reorganizations had been made, the public was still dissatisfied with the manner in which resources were deployed and responses made when a disaster struck with fury.

Almost 20 years later, Senator Barbara Mikulski, Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee responsible for FEMA's funding wrote to Comptroller General Charles A. Bowsher:

I am outraged by the federal government's pathetically sluggish and ill-planned response to the devastating disaster wrought by Hurricane Andrew in Florida and Louisiana, which left many lives in shambles. Time and again, the federal government has failed to respond quickly and effectively to major ¹⁸disasters, and no lessons have been learned from past mistakes.

GAO Findings

Reports concerning the Federal response to disasters over the years have resulted in several key findings and recommendations. The GAO found that the Federal Government's strategy for comprehensively and

effectively dealing with catastrophic disasters is deficient. It went on to make the following observations in reference to Hurricane Andrew:

- Federal Government catastrophic disaster relief strategy was deficient;
- Federal agencies were unable to assess damage needs;
- Federal Government lacked statutory authority to anticipate disaster requests;
- State and local government lacked training and funding for disaster response;
- DoD could respond effectively to immediate needs of disaster victims.

Hurricane Andrew proved that for large, catastrophic disasters, the military has the capability of responding to immediate needs of disaster victims in a highly effective manner.¹⁹

The GAO also made recommendations to improve the way the Federal Government decides whether State or local governments need assistance, uses existing authority to provide effective assistance, and enhances State and local preparedness to minimize the amount of Federal assistance needed. They suggested that Congress consider giving Federal agencies explicit authority to prepare for and respond to catastrophic disasters.

National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA)

In September 1992, Congress mandated that NAPA conduct a comprehensive and objective study of governmental capacity to respond effectively to major natural disasters. NAPA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, collegial organization charged by Congress to improve governance at all levels: Federal, State, and local. The NAPA study

(Coping with Catastrophe: Building an Emergency Management System To Meet People's Needs in Natural and Man-made Disasters), written for the US Congress and FEMA in February 1993, acknowledged that there was a lack of communication between government entities, inadequate information on damage, insufficient assessment of local needs, and uncertainty over who would pay the relief costs.²⁰

Also included in the NAPA report were findings similar to those of the GAO, but others which went further and provided more details:

1. Retain the current mission and role of the Armed Forces in emergency management and disaster response.
2. Set in motion a review by DoD of the role of the National Guard concerning emergency management/disaster response.
3. Make the Federal Response Plan the President's Plan.
4. Establish a Domestic Crisis Monitoring Unit in the White House as a responsibility of an Assistant to the President.
5. Create a coherent sense of mission centered on the vision of a high-performance, high-reliability agency of government capable of integrating and coordinating with Federal Government's emergency management functions.
6. Transfer the defense mobilization functions to DoD or GSA.
7. Develop a strategic policy statement outlining the several broad emergency management policy goals.
8. Establish a modern communication and information resource management system.

FEMA IG

On 14 January 1993, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Office of the Inspector General issued a performance audit of FEMA's disaster

management program for Hurricane Andrew victims in Florida. This report reiterates the findings of both the GAO report and the NAPA report. Further, it specifically addressed the following items: FEMA officials followed a "wait and see" practice based on the belief that FEMA's first authorized function was that of damage assessment. Because of this, during the several days of warning before the hurricane struck, FEMA made little or no preparations (i.e., the movement of staff, equipment or supplies to the area).

The second and third issues were identical to the GAO and NAPA reports: FEMA's lack of a timely damage assessment, and the absence of a request for aid. They felt they lacked authority to initiate direct Federal assistance unless specifically told to by State officials. These were the primary reasons that aid was so slow in getting to Florida victims.

The report also outlined the following issues: Cost sharing between State and Federal Government delayed responses; other federal agencies awaiting assignments from FEMA; uncoordinated mass care by multiple agencies; the public not well-informed about sources of information; confusion caused by the multiple aid programs, and unsatisfactory administrative support systems. The IG's report provides detailed specifics of all issues as well as recommendations.

National Performance Review

This review was Vice President Al Gore's six-month study on reinventing government submitted to the President on 7 September 1993. The goal of the study was to move from red tape to results and create a government that works better and costs less. The Review Committee of

federal employees sought ideas and advice from all across America: from State and local government officials, management experts, business leaders, other federal workers, and from private citizens eager for change.

The Federal Emergency Management agency was reviewed and many common issues surfaced in the report. Whereas FEMA's early focus was on preparedness for nuclear war, the current situation and recent natural disasters highlighted the need for FEMA to channel its resources to respond to all hazards. More emphasis should be placed on preparations for disasters in lieu of responding to consequences; anticipating problems could cut action response time; and results-oriented incentives should be created to reduce disaster costs. Leadership was deemed the weak link in FEMA's role as the emergency management coordinator pointing out the need for a skilled management team among political appointees and a career staff.

In reviewing all of the reports, several strikingly similar items appear in each report: organizational structure, funding, training, communications/information systems, role of the military, and role of the National Guard. These commonalities are the basis for criticizing the current FEMA organizational structure. In the following discussion I will outline one possible solution to FEMA's domestic emergency management actions.

CHAPTER V

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR DOMESTIC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

What is the answer for developing a responsive strategic framework, and what should the proposed organization look like? Who will be responsible for what, and when will they react?

As pointed out in previous chapters, there is a multitude of agencies and activities in the United States that have responsibility for some form of emergency management. In many cases, these agencies work against one another by duplicating services, or not rendering the right services. In addition, individual citizens become involved not only in helping themselves but helping others as well. However, when disasters exceed local level capabilities, the only alternative is to request additional help from the next higher echelon. Normally this would be the county level organization. When these organizations are tasked to their maximum, the next level of response is the State emergency management offices which normally include the State police, State National Guard units, and many other State agencies as well as private organizations. States overwhelmed by a disaster then turn to the Federal Government for assistance.

My research indicates that there is a definite need to create a comprehensive Federal emergency response program--one that will work effectively with State and local governments. This does not infer that

FEMA should be abolished; on the contrary. I believe there is an important role for a FEMA-type organization to play in domestic emergency management. The structure that I would propose would make improvements to the existing system in the areas of organization, structure, funding, training, communications/information systems, the role of the military and the role of the National Guard. All of these areas were identified in my research of the various reports as being deficient and in need of improvement.

Legislation

I would first take an extensive look at current laws, Executive Orders, regulations and other guidelines that have developed over time. Many existing documents were created during crises (or shortly thereafter) without all of the principal players taking part in forming a strategic doctrine for the Federal Government's role in managing domestic emergencies. In formulating new laws and regulations I would first address the organizational structure. Elected officials are often involved either during an emergency or on committees after the fact. Their involvement can lead to political decisions which may not necessarily be correct. Therefore, only one committee in the House and one in the Senate should have jurisdiction over the organization.

The organizational structure should be reformed from the current structure placing a much greater emphasis on domestic emergency management. FEMA's previous infatuation with preparing for Nuclear War and Mobilization has been a real detriment in handling domestic emergencies. With the end of the Cold War and the downsizing of our military, it is time to relook at FEMA and its role in national security

issues. Over the years the national security programs have been highly regarded and protected within FEMA, and their break-up would meet stiff opposition. However, the FEMA resources must be rechanneled with a preponderance of the resources going to domestic emergency management. The balance of the funding could remain within a scaled-down FEMA organization specializing in FEMA's national security elements such as mobilization, continuity of government, et cetera.

Creation of a Domestic Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) is my primary plan for reinventing the way the Federal Government responds to domestic emergency management. This new agency would utilize the corporate memory of personnel with extensive domestic emergency management experience who are currently assigned to FEMA. It is not the dedicated FEMA employees who created the problem the agency has experienced in certain disasters; rather, it is the bureaucracies and bureaucrats that cause many of the system breakdowns.

The new Director of DEMA should have a cabinet level position. This would clearly place the importance of the organization at the highest level of government and give DEMA the political clout to bring about the integration of programs. Within the DEMA staff, I would reduce the number of political appointees, limiting them to director positions only. Within the upper and middle management, with the hope of selecting a director from within the current system, I would establish a strong professional career staff. With the new leadership in place, I would rechannel funding to support the new DEMA.

Funding

The pivotal question for any program at any level of government is where is the money coming from? In the world of domestic emergency

management, there are two major funding issues: (1) funding of the various training, educating, planning, preparing, monitoring and evaluating programs, and (2) payment for disaster relief. Both are high cost items. Can DEMA pay the bill? Obviously, with today's tight budget the answer is no. So, how can some of these costs be defrayed? The answer lies in several actions. A large portion of the proposed DEMA budget would come from the old FEMA appropriations. As that agency is downsized and its mission reduced in scope, it could channel a large share of funding to DEMA. In addition, Congress and the President must face the fact that DEMA will require a large infusion of funds to get up and running.

Funding can also come from States and counties throughout the nation. Their required payments would be determined by the implied risks within their boundaries. For example, States with coastlines would be required to pay a larger share into their State emergency program or to DEMA. Ideally the States would retain the funds in-State, however, the oversight to insure compliance would be at DEMA.

Additional funding could be obtained by a more realistic approach to the national insurance programs, i.e., flood insurance. This program must be enlarged and enforced. Homeowners must be required to pay a realistic premium for the risk, and the government must require homeowners to carry the mandatory insurance. If they elect not to, then they are ineligible for State and Federal assistance. Today there is little incentive to buy flood insurance since past experience indicates that everyone gets Federal support regardless of whether they had insurance. In the interest of spending wisely, States must be given financial incentives for effective planning and performance of their

emergency management plans. These rewards would pay for themselves over the long term by savings realized by the States with effective programs.

Training for State and Local Governments

Another way savings can be realized by State and local governments is by increasing their response capabilities. To accomplish this, there must be an effective education and training program at the Federal, State and local levels. To have a viable system, national level training is a basic fundamental. This will ensure a nationwide standardization that allows all Federal, State and local agencies an opportunity to support one another in emergency situations. This system currently works well within the volunteer fire departments. Local communities train together on similar equipment and procedures. When an emergency arises beyond the capability of one community, an adjacent organization can provide similarly trained personnel. Although this type of mutual aid is not utilized on a small scale, domestic emergency mutual aid training at the Federal level must be expanded. In addition, the training should emphasize the development of assessing damage and estimating the amount of mass care needs. Both of these areas were deficient in the Hurricane Andrew disaster.

Communications and Information Technology

A main contributing factor for a successful response to a domestic emergency is effective communications. DEMA's role in this area would be critical. A case in point is the breakdown in the system which FEMA ran into during Hurricane Andrew. When local authorities called for

communications equipment to the scene. However, the equipment was not compatible with local systems which rendered it practically useless. To correct this situation, DEMA must establish a standard for communications and make this equipment available nationwide.

DEMA must also develop a central information resource management office to oversee the implementation of a national information system. This office would work with Federal, State and local agencies in developing a comprehensive communications system. By providing a centralized data base, DEMA could build mutual aid disaster plans and programs which interface with one another providing compatible information processing.

Role of the Military

What role will the military play in the DEMA plan? To answer that, one must review the current policy expressed in DoD Directive 3025.1 issued 15 January 1993. The directive outlines the current plans for the military in support of civil authorities. The bottom line is that the military must be a part of the early assessment of disaster needs.

The changing global status makes it necessary to reexamine the role of the military in domestic emergency management. After Hurricane Andrew, many congressmen thought that the military should take over FEMA's role. While it is true that the military did an outstanding job during the recent disasters, the active duty military cannot be expected to take a primary role in domestic emergencies. Besides the legal ramifications, the role of the active military is to fight wars and to defend the United States. If our downsized military is called upon to

perform their primary function as well as support a domestic emergency there will not be enough personnel to perform both tasks.

With this in mind, the military should not take over domestic emergency management. However, they should continue to be used for immediate response when available, and their utilization written into contingency plans. With the active duty military committed to major regional conflicts, where can DEMA turn for frontline assistance? The answer lies in the National Guard.

The Role of the National Guard

Since its inception, the National Guard has had the mission to protect the citizens of the United States. Guard units, unlike their active duty counterparts, are normally under the command of the governors of their respective States. Therefore, they are available to respond to State emergencies on short notice. In fact, in 15 States, the State emergency management function is the responsibility of the National Guard Adjutant General.

Although it seems that the National Guard is perfect for the role of domestic emergency management, since the all-volunteer force of the mid-1970s, DoD has incorporated Guard units into the Total Force Structure. Therefore, many Guard units are strategically part of active duty forces and are thus not available for domestic emergency management.

Adding the force structure issues to the draw-down of active duty and some guard forces paints a bleak picture for the utilization of Guard forces for domestic emergency management. However, this is where my proposed DEMA organization comes into play along with changes in legislation and the Guard Force structure.

National guard units must continue to work along side their active duty counterparts in support of the total force missions. They are essential to the success of our current military strategy. However, DoD and Congress must relook at Guard peacetime manning with an eye toward domestic emergency management. These units can and will provide the first line of response in emergency situations.

In order for this to happen, Guard units must be trained not only in their primary war-fighting skills, but in domestic emergency management as well. In many cases, the training for both will be the same. The Adjutant General in each State should function as the primary point of contact for all State emergencies. Along with the governor, he would coordinate all emergency activities within the State and be the single point of contact with the regional or national representative of DEMA. The National Guard Bureau in Washington would expand its role to include domestic emergency management and coordinate the strategic policy role for all National Guard Units, in conjunction with the Adjutant Generals and State Governors.

Conclusions

It is apparent that Federal, State and local emergency responses need to be overhauled to meet the challenges of natural disasters. Primary authority must be assigned, areas of responsibility must be clearly designated, noneffective agencies must be cut adrift, funding must be anticipated and provided, and instantaneous reaction plans must be devised.

A new supervisory agency, DEMA, has been suggested to replace the numerous organizations with overlapping missions. Although the military

proved effective in reacting to emergency problems, that is not the total answer. DoD and Congress should relook at the role the National Guard could play. It is strategically located, manned with local citizens, and with emergency type training could quickly respond to natural disasters until DEMA and its supporting agencies could take control. The National Guard Bureau in Washington could expand its role to include domestic emergency management designed to coordinate with a single Federal Agency.

In reviewing all of the government and independent reports on the performance of FEMA, it is evident that the phrase reinventing the processes used by the Federal Government in managing domestic disasters is a bit drastic. While I have outlined several areas that need improvement, the system does not require a total reinvention process. Implementation of the outlined changes would easily produce an effective system for managing domestic disasters within the Federal Government.

ENDNOTES

1. The powers of the Federal Government are found in the US Constitution, Article 1, Section 8.
2. J. Madison, C. Rossiter, ed., The Federalist, No. 45, 1961, 292-93.
3. PL 88-451, 78 Stat 505.
4. PL 89-339, 79 Stat 1301.
5. PL 91-79, 83 Stat 125.
6. Congressional Research Service, Federal Disaster Relief Legislation and Administration: A Summary, 30 April 1988, 27-32.
7. Office of Emergency Preparedness, Disaster Preparedness: A Report to the Congress, 1972.
8. National Governor's Association, 1978 Emergency Preparedness Project: Final Report, 1978.
9. US, Congress, Joint Committee on Defense Production, 1977, 12.
10. Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978, 3 CFR, 1978, Comp., 329.
11. Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Mobilization: Current Status and Outlook. Proceedings of the 8th Annual Mobilization Conference, June 1989, 85.
12. 42 U.S.C. 5121, et seq.
13. Federal Response Plan (for Public Law 93-288, as amended).
14. Federal Emergency Management Agency, 1972 Principal Threats Facing Communities and Local Emergency Management Coordinators, 1992, iv.
15. US General Accounting Office, Disaster Management: A Report to the Congress, 1993.
16. USA Today, 9 August 1993, 8-A.
17. Paul Hoversten, "FEMA Quickens Its Pace of Federal Support," USA Today, 13 July 1993, 6-A.
18. US, Congress, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies, Letter to Comptroller General requesting a GAO audit, 3 September 1992. 19. GAO Report, 27 January 1993.
19. GAO Report, 27 January 1993.
20. NAPA Report, Coping with Catastrophe, February 1993.

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